

EU fisheries agreement with The Gambia

During its December plenary session, Parliament is due to vote on giving its consent to the conclusion of a new sustainable fisheries partnership agreement and implementing protocol with the Republic of The Gambia. The agreement provides an updated framework for bilateral fisheries cooperation, whereas the protocol grants fishing opportunities to EU vessels in Gambian waters and aims to promote a sustainable fisheries policy and the responsible exploitation of fisheries resources in the area.

Background

The EU launched its first fisheries [agreement](#) with The Gambia in 1987, accompanied by a protocol renewed in [1990](#) and [1993](#). After the expiry of the last protocol in 1996, the agreement remained in force but was inactive ('dormant'). However, EU fishing vessels, mainly from Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal, could continue fishing for demersal fish, shrimps and cephalopods in Gambian waters under [private agreements](#). Since 2014, an exclusivity clause has prevented such arrangements when a sustainable fisheries partnership agreement (SFPA) is in place, albeit dormant (Article 31(5) of Regulation [1380/2013](#)).

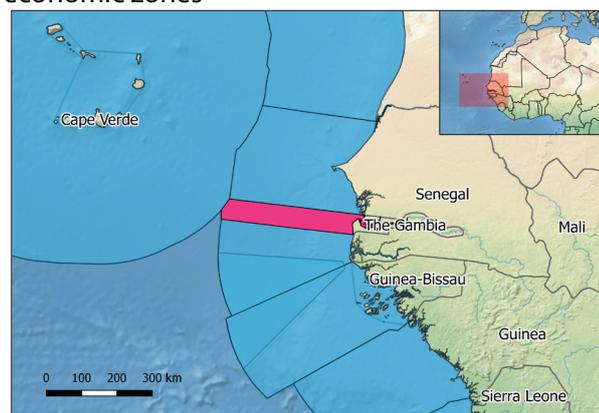
European Commission proposal

Following a favourable ex-ante [evaluation study](#) and Council [authorisation](#), the Commission negotiated a new [agreement and protocol](#). These were initialled on 19 October 2018 and have applied provisionally since their signature on 31 July 2019. The agreement, part of the [SFPA network](#) in West Africa, is a tuna SFPA with a limited demersal fish component. It is set to last six years and is tacitly renewable. Under the associated six-year protocol, [fishing opportunities](#) are allocated to 28 purse seiners and 10 pole-and-line vessels from Spain and France, to fish highly migratory species equivalent to a reference tonnage of 3 300 tonnes per year. In addition, up to three demersal trawlers from Spain and Greece are allowed to target black hake, with a joint catch volume of 750 tonnes per year. In return, the EU pays an annual contribution of €550 000. Half of this amount, €275 000 per year, covers the access rights of EU vessels. The other half represents sectoral support for Gambian fisheries policy, in particular for measures relating to sanitary and quality management to develop export capacities, fisheries control and the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, the strengthening of scientific capacity, and the establishment of marine protected areas. In addition to the EU contribution, vessel owners are estimated to pay €315 000 annually via fees for fishing authorisations.

European Parliament position

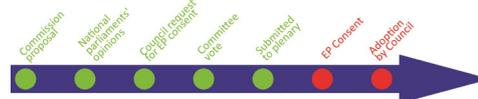
On 12 November 2019, the Committee on Fisheries (PECH) recommended that Parliament give its consent to the Council decision on the conclusion of the agreement and protocol, with the Committee on Budgets (BUDG) providing a favourable opinion. This [recommendation](#) will now be considered in plenary.

Gambian waters and neighbouring exclusive economic zones



Data source: [Maritime Boundaries Geodatabase](#) (consulted on 14.11.2019); [Natural Earth](#).

Consent: [2019/0076\(NLE\)](#); Committee responsible: PECH;
Rapporteur: Carmen Avram (S&D, Romania).



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